

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7, 9, and 11 are all of the pending claims. By this amendment, dependent claim 8 has been canceled, and the recitations of claim 8 some of the recitations of dependent claim 3 have been added to independent claim 1.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7 and 11 are allowed.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5, 8, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over JP 2002-127955 (hereinafter “Komatsu ‘955”) in view of JP 3-19785 (hereinafter “JP ‘785”).

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to recite:

1. The inner periphery rolling contact surface is provided by forming a stepped portion on the inner peripheral surface of the rubber elastic body.
2. A. central portion of each of the rubber lugs is disposed so as to correspond to the stepped portion.

Due to *the center of each rubber lug corresponding to the stepped portion*, reinforcement of the stepped portion and spring characteristics thereof can be obtained”. See exemplary embodiment described in the original specification at paragraph [0017]. For example, compare exemplary FIGS. 1 and 2, in which the central portion of the lugs 15 is disposed so as to correspond to the location of the stepped portion 16.

Applicant respectfully submits that this feature would not have been obvious in view of any reasonable combination of the applied references. For example, assuming *arguendo* that the

devices of JP '955 and JP '785 were combined, the lugs 4 of JP '955 would be offset with respect to the portions of the inner peripheral surface that would include a stepped portion.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable.

Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claims 2-5 and 9 are patentable at least due to their dependency.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

For details, please refer to the description of paragraph 0017 in the specification.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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